

# CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL OF POPULAR LITERATURE

Science and Arts.

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 333.

SATURDAY, MAY 19, 1860.

Price 1½d.

## A BOTTLE DEPARTMENT.

In the month of May 1859, a South Australian fisherman saw a bottle washed on shore near the mouth of the river Murray. He picked it up, and found it quite incrustated with small shells. On opening the bottle, a piece of paper appeared, on which a few words were written, to the effect that the writer was on board a ship coming from Liverpool; that on the 4th of May 1857, the ship was near the Cape de Verd Islands; that the paper, enclosed in a bottle, was about to be cast into the sea; and that the finder of the paper, whoever he might be, was requested to send it to the writer's brother at Sheffield.

Let us make the singular voyage of this paper the text for a brief discourse.

That light solid bodies, floating on the surface of the ocean, will move hither and thither by the action of ebb and flood tide, we all know; that a strong wind will have the same effect, irrespective of tide, we also know; and sailors know, if landmen do not, that there are moving currents in the ocean independent both of winds and tides. But it is not known, until after long-continued and carefully-made observations, what is the average amount and direction of movement at any particular place. In all probability, he was no very profound philosopher who first conceived the idea of testing this matter by watching floating bodies on the surface of the water; it was rather the manner of realising the idea, than the idea itself, that deserves notice. A glass bottle, or a metal vessel shaped like a bottle, will sink in water if left open, because the specific gravity of glass and metal is greater than that of water; but if the bottle be securely corked and sealed, it will float, on account of the interior being filled with air instead of water. Let us suppose that a passenger, on the way to Australia, throws such a bottle overboard: unless it strikes against a rock, it may float about for a long period of time. But how is the thrower ever to know whether the bottle will float, or on what shore it may be thrown? 'Well,' says some ingenious individual, whose name has not been handed down to posterity, 'let us write a few words on a piece of paper, requesting the finder of the bottle to send the paper to some particular address.' The right plan is hit upon. If the finder be good-natured enough to respond to the appeal, and, moreover, makes a record of the when and the where of the finding, he may render it certain that the bottle has performed a long and curious voyage, although the details of the voyage are yet unknown. Thus the Australian fisherman picked up a bottle which had for two years been knocking about the ocean, and must, under any

circumstances, have travelled many thousand miles, let its course have been what it might.

Seventeen years ago, it occurred to Commander Becher that the *Nautical Magazine* might be made the vehicle for a systematic record of these interesting bottle-voyages. For a period of thirty or forty years previously, the newspapers had occasional paragraphs to the effect that a bottle had been 'picked up,' containing such and such items of information; and the question arose, whether these records, collected and tabulated, might not in time give useful information concerning the currents, tides, and winds of the ocean. Each record, it is true, is subject to possible calamities, numerous and varied. If the bottle be not well corked and sealed, water will enter, and bottle and paper will go to the bottom. If it strikes against a rock, its fate is equally disastrous. If it floats to some shore, it may be at a spot where it escapes human observation for a year or more, or even for ever. If it be really picked up and opened, the contents may be unreadable by the finder; or he may not care about it; or he may be too poor or too ignorant to forward the paper to the required destination. Any one of these contingencies may happen. Still, good may result from a collecting of those papers which *do* come safely to hand, even if they be only one in a hundred. So Commander Becher thought, and he carried out his plan in an ingenious manner. In order to keep his plan within practicable limits at first, he confined his attention to a portion of the Atlantic Ocean. He laid down a chart on Mercator's projection, extending from 6 degrees south latitude to 63 degrees north latitude; and from the coasts of Europe and Africa on the east, to those of North and South America on the west. This chart he caused to be engraved to the size of about eighteen inches by twelve. On it he laid down a sort of history of every bottle-voyage of which authentic information had come to hand. He made a black spot to denote the place of the ship when the bottle was thrown into the sea; another spot to denote the place where the bottle was picked up; and a straight line connecting the two. He would of course have preferred to trace the crooked route—often, doubtless, a *very* crooked route—which the bottle had really followed; but this was precisely the kind of knowledge which he did not possess, and which, indeed, was the very problem to be ultimately solved. One hundred and nineteen bottles had their voyages and travels put into print in this way. Very curious it is to see the lines of route as thus marked out. Some—let the actual courses have been what they may—display a tendency from east to west; others as decided a leaning from west to east; and each is a member of a group pretty constant in its travelling characteristics. For instance,

most of those which were thrown into the sea near the north-west coast of Africa were, if found at all, discovered on the shores of some or other among the West India Islands. If set afloat anywhere on the route between England and New York, they have a tendency to effect a landing about the Scilly Islands, or on the Cornwall or Devon coasts. If our arctic explorers launched a bottle when about to enter the stormy seas of Greenland, there was a fair chance that it would land somewhere on the Orkneys or the Hebrides; on the other hand, some of the bottles appear to have made most eccentric voyages; and it was evident that much had yet to be learned before the varying effects of currents, tides, and winds could be known.

This bottle-chart attracted a good deal of attention among nautical men. It was rendered more useful by several pages of appended text, giving the chief particulars of each bottle-voyage—such as the name of the ship, the signature of the person who cast the bottle into the sea, the date, the latitude and longitude, the place where, and the time when, the bottle was picked up, and the interval which had elapsed between the immersion and the finding of the bottle. A correspondence which followed the publication of the chart rendered evident the fact, that large numbers of these erratic bottles are always floating about, having a much greater chance of being lost altogether than of ever coming to hand. A surgeon on board an Indianman stated that he threw bottles overboard every day during the voyage, each bottle containing a paper with a memorandum such as those above adverted to: so far as he knew, very few of those bottles reached the hands of persons who took any further interest in the matter. Sometimes the bottle or its paper had much to go through before the wishes of the writer could be fulfilled. In one instance, the commander of the *Chanticleer* threw a bottle overboard in the Atlantic; it was picked up by a peasant on the coast of Spain four months afterwards; he kept it two months, not knowing what to make of the matter; it passed into the hands of a more intelligent Spaniard, who sent it to the British consul at Corunna, by whom it was forwarded to the Secretary of the Admiralty. Sometimes the object of the writer was evidently a useful one—that of contributing his mite towards a history of the winds and waves; while others displayed mere vanity and waggery, the paper being filled with odd scraps of verses and jokes. If there was a request that the paper should be sent to the Admiralty, foreign officials displayed readiness in complying with the request; and even if the parties concerned were only moving in private life, the same thing was often courteously done. Thus, a bottle was picked up on the French coast, near Bayonne, which had been thrown into the sea nine months before by a passenger on board the merchant-ship *Lady Louisa*. The writing within directed that the paper should be sent to the passenger's brother, to a particular address at Woolwich; and after passing through many hands, the paper was transmitted by the Minister of Marine as directed.

The *Nautical Magazine* became a recognised treasury for narratives of these bottle-voyages; and the number increased so fast, that Commander Becher deemed it desirable to revise in 1852 the chart which he had prepared in 1843. He added sixty-two to the former number, and rendered his chart a much more fully occupied piece of paper than before. Again did the contributions accumulate, and again was the engraver set to work; for in 1856, Commander (now Captain) Becher caused a third edition of the chart to be prepared. A Mediterranean series was also commenced in 1853, and beginnings have been made for an Indian and Pacific series; but for a long time to come, the Atlantic will be the chief scene of bottle-voyaging, owing to the large number of ships that are always crossing it.

Some of these bottles make very long voyages, and, considering the circumstances, often in a short space of time, though in other cases the period has extended over several years. As we have already remarked, however, both *time* and *space* are left very vaguely determined, for there is a great doubt whether the bottle will be picked up just when it has concluded its voyage; while the route followed is in almost every instance much longer than a straight line between the two points. So far as concerns the measured distance in a straight line, we find instances of 690 miles, 2020 miles, 2260 miles, 3600 miles, and 3900 miles. The bottle found on the Australian coast in 1859, adverted to in our opening paragraph, must have made a voyage of very many thousand miles, for the editor of the *Nautical Magazine*, judging from the known directions of currents, inferred that it had been carried from the Cape de Verd Islands eastward or south-east by the Guinea current, then westward by the equatorial current, then along the American coast by the Brazilian current, then across the South Atlantic eastward towards the Cape of Good Hope, and then across a wide stretch of ocean to Australia. In 1858 a bottle travelled from Manilla to the Moluccas, about 1000 miles, in six months, shewing that there are pretty active influences at work in those seas, even without allowing for any unknown sojourn of the bottle on the shore. This sojourn is indeed sometimes a long one. A bottle from the *Thunder*, in 1847, was nearly three years before it was picked up; one from the *Lark*, in 1838, four years; one from the *Manning*, in 1810, five years; one from the *Lady Louisa*, in 1830, nine years; one from the *Symmetry*, in 1825, ten years; one from the *Carshalton Park*, in 1827, eleven years. The most lengthened delay ever recorded, was that of a bottle from the *Blonde*, which, thrown into the sea on the 23d of September 1826, on a voyage from Liverpool to New York, was picked up on the French coast on the 15th of June 1842—nearly sixteen years afterwards. How long it had remained in that spot, no one can tell.

It has been contended by some persons, seamen, *savans*, and others, that the voyages of the bottles are often too capricious to render much scientific service; and they appeal to the bottle-chart for many curious instances of this. Some authorities assert that there is a current to the east from Labrador and Newfoundland towards the British Islands; yet Sir John Ross asserts, that in 1818, he threw into the sea twenty-five copper cylinders, when his arctic ship was about entering Davis' Strait; and not one of these floating cylinders was ever known to come to hand—a fact which appeared to him somewhat incompatible with received notions. In 1819, two bottles were thrown out on one day from the *Newcastle*; one was picked up on the coast of Ireland, and the other at the far-distant Azores.

But it is very fairly contended, on the other hand, that these so-called 'capricious' voyages are not capricious at all; but depend on physical causes which, though not well understood at present, may by and by be rendered intelligible by these very voyages themselves. One or more of Ross's cylinders may, for aught we know, be at this moment snugly housed in some creek or cove among the scantily inhabited Hebrides. Of the two bottles, one of which travelled to Ireland, and the other to the Azores, both may have travelled together to the last-named place, where one ran ashore, while the other got into another current which swept it round to Ireland; for it is known that some of the bottles take remarkably circuitous routes, according as they are caught in particular currents. Thus, a bottle was thrown into the sea from the *Prima Donna* ship in 1850, off Cape Coast in Africa; it was picked up on the coast of Cornwall; and from the course of the various currents, it is believed that this bottle had been first carried

south by the Guinea current, then west by the equatorial current, then north-west into the Gulf of Mexico, and then by the Gulf Stream to Cornwall. Many singular examples are on record, tending to show that, on an average, there is an eastward movement of the surface-drift in the northern part of the Atlantic, and a westward in the tropical part. The *Corair* threw out two bottles in 1838: one was picked up 160 miles off, the other 250 miles, but both had followed nearly the same general direction. The *Blonde*, already mentioned, threw out two bottles in 1826, within five days of each other; one was espied fourteen years afterwards, and the other nearly sixteen years, but both nearly on the same part of the French coast. The *Alexander* threw out two bottles on the same day in 1813; both were found fourteen months afterwards on our western coasts. When Captains Collinson and McClure started for Behring's Strait in 1850, in search of Sir John Franklin, they both threw bottles into the sea while sailing down the Atlantic: the bottle from the *Investigator* (McClure) was launched on the 22d of February, about 600 miles north of the equator; that from the *Enterprise* (Collinson) was launched nearly at the equator on the 3d of March. After voyages of 186 and 367 days respectively, these bottles were picked up almost exactly at the same spot on the Honduras coast. The *Wellington* threw out two bottles in 1836, on two consecutive days: one was found nine months afterwards, the other, not till after four years; but this was due to the fact that the second bottle happened to reach the same coast at a spot very little frequented. The direction of the current, or at least of the surface-drift, was very singularly shewn by the voyage of a bottle in 1842. A ship left Thurso with Highland emigrants for Canada; when 1500 miles out, a bottle was launched; and this bottle found its way to a part of the coast within two miles of the very port whence the ship had sailed five months before.

Few persons now doubt the usefulness of this system. All we have to guard against is, hasty inferences from the details of any particular voyage. Captain Becher remarks, in connection with one of his charts: 'The uniformity in the direction of the courses between the points of departure and arrival is very remarkable in most parts of the chart. In the equatorial regions, and in the more northern latitudes, when the effects of the Gulf Stream and westerly winds prevail, this uniformity of direction is remarkable; as also the courses of those few which have been thrown over on the eastern limits of that stream. So that in many parts of the ocean before us, a good guess might be made at the direction which a bottle would take when committed to the sea. So far as the surface-drift is concerned, the experiment has been successful.' The Admiralty share this opinion; for they have encouraged the officers of the Queen's ships to launch a bottle occasionally.

Of the thousands—nay, millions—of beer-bottles, pale-ale bottles, wine-bottles, brandy-bottles, pickle-bottles which are taken out annually by ships leaving our shores, any one is suitable for this purpose, if properly secured; but Captain Fishbourne, of the hydrographer's department, has suggested a better arrangement for those who really wish to regard this matter as one of scientific interest. He suggests that the bottles should be made white by the introduction of oxide of arsenic into the liquid glass of which they are made, in order that they may be more visible while floating. He also advises that, when a bottle is picked up at sea (not on the shore), it should be opened, the paper read, and another paper inserted with it, stating the particulars of the finding; after which the bottle is to be again sealed, and thrown into the sea at once. If this were done three or four times in succession, three or four points in the track of the bottle would be made known, and a rough approximation to its curve of movement

might be made. So far as we can detect, by examining the chart and records, this ingenious suggestion has not yet been acted on.

One of the most remarkable examples on record, not of the voyage, but of the finding, of a floating messenger, occupied the attention of newspaper-readers eight or nine years ago. It is known that in 1493, Columbus, when near the Azores, encountered a dreadful storm; and it is stated in an old book of voyages that, on that occasion, being doubtful whether he would live to reach Spain again, he wrote a few particulars of his voyage on a piece of parchment, enclosed it in a keg or small wooden cask, and cast it into the sea—hoping that the document might reach the hands of his joint sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella. On the 27th of August 1851 (so said the *Times*, on the authority of an American newspaper), Captain d'Auberville, in the bark *Chieftain* of Boston, picked up a floating substance on the African coast opposite Gibraltar. It was so covered with barnacles and sea-shells that its nature could not at first be determined; but on closer scrutiny, it proved to be a small cedar keg. When opened, the keg displayed within it a cocoa-nut shell, coated with some resinous composition; and within the cocoa-nut was a piece of parchment covered with very old writing, which none on board could read. A merchant at Gibraltar, however, deciphered it, and found that it purported to be written by Christopher Columbus in 1493; that the ship was in a dreadful storm between Spain and the Azores; and that Columbus had determined to throw these documents, in three kegs, into the sea, in the hope that one of them at least might reach the shore. This story is so interesting that one yearns to believe it true. A keg might have remained for more than three centuries and a half unseen on the African coast; but still, we ask, where is the keg, and where is the parchment? There are persons in Europe who would almost give its weight in gold for such a precious testimony of the great navigator.

#### JUVENILE THEATRICALS.

THE royal dramatic representations given during the winter at Windsor Castle have been duly chronicled and extolled; so have private theatricals in the ancestral halls of England; the successful performances of the military and marines at Aldershot and Chatham; and the talented displays of amateurs and professionals, for philanthropic ends, throughout the country.

These entertainments have all received their well-earned meed of praise; while the holiday performances at Sycamore Cottage, Weston-cum-Haalingdean, have entirely escaped the notice of reporters and critics. Yet never were any persons more truly deserving of the name of amateurs than my six-years-old twin nephew and niece, Willy and Jemima (familiarily, Mimi), who came down to spend Christmas-time with me, and who have favoured me with representations of the various plays that they have witnessed when taken by papa to the London theatres. Love of the dramatic art must be their incentive to exertion, rather than any wish to shine in the eyes of the world, since I myself am, in their case, the entire 'enlightened British public;' and, to confess the truth, I don't think that they value my opinion a button. Be that as it may, it is certain that they are indefatigable, and that they work quite as hard as though their daily bread were dependent on the success of their histrionic efforts. I wake in the morning to the clash and clang of a desperate broadsword combat, and fall asleep at night to the song of the *Walking Sandwich*. The versatility of the young actors is amazing. Willy can personify everything, from King Lear down to Sam Waxend the drunken cobbler; and Mimi is equally at home in Lady Macbeth and Dolly Suds the washerwoman. It is customary with amateurs, in general, to select



comédiettas of a drawing-room character, as being easily represented; but my youngsters are far above any such considerations; and during their sojourn at Sycamore Cottage, I have been fortunate enough to witness a surprising range of pieces, culled from tragedy, comedy, opera, melodrama, and farce—from everything, indeed, except pantomime. Thank goodness, my Lilliputian performers have never seen a pantomime; if they had, I tremble to think what would have been the result. For a parlour pantomime they would have performed to a dead certainty.

The pieces follow one another in such rapid succession that I sometimes experience a great difficulty in perceiving where the tragedy ends and the farce begins. Melodrama, I fancy, is their favourite style, judging from the frequency with which the 'perilous pass' (between the sofa, chiffonier, and easy-chair) is threaded; the 'romantic bridge' (of sofa pillows), too, is in great requisition; by means of (a fender) *escalade*, the 'dangerous (sideboard) heights' are gained half-a-dozen times a day; the (Christmas hamper) 'rock,' otherwise 'inaccessible,' is reached with the timely aid of (footstool) 'ladders'; the (carpet-bag) 'river' is navigated, and the 'stormy sea' (of hearthrug) crossed repeatedly in an 'open' (market-basket) 'boat'; 'Eliza, with little Harry in her arms'—to wit, Mimi and her wax-doll—jumps and bounds across the 'blocks of ice' (that is, every article of furniture in the room) in a manner highly suggestive of sprained ankles and grazed elbows; and Willy, the other day, naively asked my advice as to whether he should send for the carpenter to cut a trap in the floor, in order to give due effect to the spectacle of the *Corsican Brothers*.

With regard to dresses and properties, anything and everything, wearable or portable, has been pressed into the service: anti-Macassars and D'Oyleys have figured as cardinals' aprons and Elizabethan stomachers and coifs; the breakfast-cloth, by a rapid turn in fortune's wheel, has been exalted to the rank of a Roman toga; the coloured damask table-cover has done duty as a Turkish robe; while our cook has lost a good deal of time and temper in searching for stray rolling-pins and saucepan lids, converted 'for the nonce' into truncheons and shields, and then thrown carelessly by.

Auxiliary aid has been found extremely difficult to obtain: Totty, my cat, who is of a mild disposition, and who has resided here from early kittenhood, has always resolutely refused the manager's offers. She has in vain been talked to, persuaded, scolded, and, I'm afraid, slyly cuffed. She has no notion of acting; as, witness the highly undramatic manner in which she scuttled across the passage, out at the back-door, down the garden, over the wall, and through the paddock, into the village, when Willy had strapped the doll on her back, attired in a short white skirt and fleashings, to personify Mazeppa! The action of the drama required only that she should have raced round the room, up the hamper, and over the sofa-pillows, from which she should have darted on the sideboard, and there lain down, and died of exhaustion, leaving the rescued Mazeppa to the kind offices of his friends. Having failed thus signally as an Arab steed, Totty was next cast the part of the *Dog of Montargis*, which sagacious animal carries a lantern to guide an ancient dame to the spot where an officer lies murdered, in the forest of Bondy. No amount of patience could teach pussy to hold the lantern; at last, it was tied round her neck; but she so mewed and spat, and, in the struggle to get free from the incumbrance, so burned her nose and paws, that the idea of playing the piece was abandoned as impracticable. Neither, when the *Cherokee Chief* was in course of rehearsal, could Totty be convinced of the necessity that existed for her remaining quietly under the sofa, exposed to a raking fire of dried pease and paper-pellets, inasmuch as she was wholly unconscious that she was supposed to represent a ferocious tiger

lying *perdu* in a jungle; though, at the last rehearsal of that effective situation, Totty seemed perfectly alive to the requirements of the character, for, aggravated thereto by the well-sustained assaults of the enemy, she sprang from her lair in a terrible rage, and rushing furiously at Tom Oakheart the sailor (Willy), carved a curious hieroglyphic on his chin; since which, being voted a bad actress, Totty has remained unmolested on the ottoman by the fireplace, from which calm retreat she lazily surveys the doings of the company, their dressings and undressings, their marchings and countermarchings, their evolutions and revolutions, their blood-thirsty combats, and their pathetic love-scenes. To pussy, it is now a matter of perfect indifference whether the 'unhappy Persian captive' (Mimi), bound with 'galling fetters' (of tape), sighs her heart out behind the 'bars of her prison' (the small-clothes horse); or whether she assumes the (pasteboard) 'crown of England,' and, as Queen Elizabeth, boxes the ears of a lordly favourite. At first, it is true, the overture, played on 'popular instruments' (the shovel and tongs), somewhat discomposed the serenity of her countenance; and she used to set up her back when the 'loud roar of the (tea-tray) thunder' resounded through the apartment, or the 'dreadful boom of (hammer and soup-ladle) cannon' rent the air; but now, after several weeks' experience, she purs and dozes her days away pretty much as she used to do when Sycamore Cottage was the abode of perfect quietude.

The next attempt at obtaining extra assistance was also frustrated. A magnificent cockatoo, sent me by a dear friend in Australia, inhabits one corner of the parlour. Being of domestic habits, he seldom quits his perch, at the top of a high rose-wood pole, with mimic branches fixed at intervals here and there to assist him in getting up and down; though he does occasionally condescend to honour us with his company at meal-times, when he calls our attention to his wants by vociferating, in hoarse angry tones, 'Pretty cockatoo.' This ill-tempered importation from a foreign land the children tried to conciliate, by dint of bribes abstracted from the sugar-basin, and whilst they titivated his delicate yellow plumage with patches of red and blue paint. That was what they begged the loan of my box of water-colours for. The piebald coat, they averred, was a capital 'make-up' for the part which they wanted him to support—the popinjay in the *Fire-raiser*. His performance was to consist merely in standing quietly on the perch, until shot by the young lady, when he should have fallen at her feet, 'stiff, stark, stone-dead,' as the song says. After several rehearsals, it was proved beyond doubt that 'pretty cockatoo' was too stupid to drop at the right moment; so it was arranged that he should be jerked off his perch by means of a string, which my nephew—not without much difficulty—had contrived to attach to his leg. *Bang* went the pop-gun, and *down* went the bird! Poor dear creature! his leg was nearly broken; but for the hurt he took ample revenge, seizing poor Mimi's plump little arm, as she threw herself on her knee in attitude, and biting out a piece of the flesh. After this act of cannibalism, the cockatoo was discarded with ignominy, and having evidently no taste for theatrical doings, has ever since resided in retirement.

These repeated failures, one would imagine, might have taught the juvenile actors the wisdom of relying upon their own unsaid resources; yet not an hour after the popinjay affair, when they were preparing to enact the grand oriental spectacle of *Blue Beard*, I actually overheard them talking in the passage to Bim Rudd (our cowboy), and trying to cajole him into bringing the huge mastiff, Boatswain, into the parlour, to personate the elephant! 'It beant no use, missy; Bozn, he be desput zavage! I se zartain he wouldn't ha' that'n thingamee tied to his jaws nohow.' 'That'n thingamee' I found was Mimi's

green parasol, which she thought would make a capital substitute for the elephant's trunk. I immediately put a most decided negative on Bontswain's *début*, for he happens to be the very Caliban of dogs, brimful of spite and ill-nature, and, on the slightest provocation, I feel sure that he would have demolished the whole dramatic corps of Sycamore Cottage. During his five months' residence in our dog-kennel, he has not made a single friend, nor would I keep him, but that he was a legacy from Cousin Walford, who stated in his will that he 'did not know of any one, except Hannah Letbee, that he could trouble with such an ill-conditioned beast.' Thus foiled in their designs on Bontswain, they turned for aid to Bim (Abimelech) himself, and—their hopes of an elephant being crushed—resolved upon transforming the cowboy into the skeleton of the fatal Blue Chamber! Now Bim is not particularly well adapted for such a rôle, as he is very fat, and wears a perpetual grin of good-humour on his broad chubby face. These trifling disadvantages were kindly overlooked by his employers; and when they had encased him tightly in an old black shawl, illustrated, with (anything but) anatomical accuracy, by a set of ribs in chalk; whitened his visage; and propped his mouth wide open with three pieces of a broken tobacco-pipe, to resemble frightful gigantic teeth—Bim really made a more respectable skeleton than could have been anticipated. Since then, I have permitted him, when his morning's work is done, to assist regularly in the performances, wherein, as a supernumerary, he is faultless; but when trusted to deliver a few lines, he speaks them in a broad Somersetshire dialect, and with much alteration of the hard words.

There are some drawbacks to all these pleasures, certainly. My drab burnoose, for instance, has been so recklessly hauled about by monks, brigands, and lovers in disguise, that it has been rendered 'incapable'; the choicest volumes from my book-shelves have been fearfully maltreated by Dominie Sampson; my newly arrived *Chambers's Journal*, to the perusal of which I intended to devote my evening, I was horrified to find cut up in infinitesimal fragments, and showered about for a snow-storm in the *Green Bushes*. Yesterday, in the twilight, I prepared the tea (as I supposed), but which turned out to be a pleasant mixture of sand and currants; the witches in *Macbeth* had forgotten to inform me that they had used my tea-caddy as a caldron wherein to deposit their mystic charms and cook their unwholesome broth. Inquiring what had become of its usual contents, I was referred to a jar in the parlour cupboard, where I found my tea had been emptied amongst a lot of ground-rice.

My pet square table (the desolate island of the actors) has been put *hors de combat* by having one of its legs fractured; my knives have been irreparably damaged in deadly warfare; the roll of new flannel that I was going to make into petticoats for my poor neighbour, Sally Lindop's children, was missing for more than a week, when, just as I had given it up for lost, and purchased another piece in its stead, Mimi remembered that the article in question had been used to stuff a *porter's knot* for Sampson Burr.

This evening's performance consists of the interesting drama, entitled *Jessie Brown, or the Relief of Lucknow*. Mimi, as the heroine, wrapped in a checked bed-curtain, by way of a tartan plaid, a ragged handkerchief on her head, to denote extreme misery, was occupied for more than ten minutes in singing snatches of Scottish ballads, with a woful attempt at the accent; *hers* being an imitation of the Scotch dialect of the metropolitan actress whom she had seen perform the part. The last ration had been served out, and death by starvation stared the besieged in the face, when suddenly Jessie starts up; she hears the 'bonny air,' *The Campbells are Coming*, played on the bagpipes (the bellows); the British army (Willy) rapidly approaches,

knocks down the rebellious sepoy (Bim) over and over again, and stabs them to the heart repeatedly, observing at the same time that 'such rascals can't be too dead!'

The fortress (the centre table) is stormed, and I, whom the actors persist in recognising as the 'blood-stained tyrant,' Nena Sahib, am glad to evacuate the Residency, and make a precipitate retreat into the neighbouring territory (my bedroom), carrying with me my baggage (writing materials), and leaving the conquerors in undisputed possession of Lucknow.

The uproar of victory greets my ears, and, stealing gently to the door, I reconnoitre through the keyhole. The British leader, in the centre of the fortress, waves aloft a flag of triumph (my French cambric handkerchief on the end of the toasting-fork); at his feet, reclining in a graceful *pose*, is Jessie Brown, crowned with victorious laurel (my visiting-cap with the artificials); while massive chests of captured plate (the cream-jug and tea-spoons) are ostentatiously spread out before them; and the rifled treasures of the east (my garnet necklace and emerald brooch) dangle triumphantly from the gaselier that is suspended above the interesting group.

## THE PROFESSOR'S WIFE.

### IN TWO CHAPTERS.

#### CHAPTER I.

It is a pleasant familiar instance of the great law of compensation, that in this grim northern climate of ours—thanks to our abundant supply of coal and gas—a look of indoor comfort is easily attained, comes within the compass of small means, and is quite compatible with homely furniture. Mrs Macgregor's parlour in the little sea-coast town of C— was a striking case in point, one wild October evening about thirteen years ago. The wind that was raging out of doors seemed to have only exhilarating effect upon the fire within, which roared in friendly emulation, and leaped up in bright flames almost outshining the gas, though the three burners were lit, for Mrs Macgregor was expecting company. The closely drawn curtains were not very new indeed, but of a good uncompromising red, in which a burst of fire-light would pick out now and then bits of quite gorgeous colouring; the horse-hair sofa—generally a depressing article of furniture—had fine lustrous effects in the blaze; a large cat, sitting erect on the rug, with eyes firmly closed against the unwonted brilliancy, did his part towards the general effect; and best of all, a round table in the middle of the room, with a snowy tablecloth, set out with piles of scones, delicate cookies, currant-jelly of ruby redness, orange-marmalade clear as amber, and all the glories of a Scotch tea, contributed to produce a sense of comfort which gladdened Mrs Macgregor's honest heart, as she watched the 'infusing,' and waited for the first tap at her little front door.

That first tap was timidly given by Miss Mackay the milliner; the next by Mrs Caird, the widow of a United Presbyterian minister—a woman of lugubrious spirit still, though many years had elapsed since her husband's death—wearing for best a crape-covered gown, whose excessive gloom even Mrs Macgregor's fire could not light up; the third guest was Mrs Agnew of the post-office, a round cheery little woman, given to tittle-tattle—incapable, indeed, of tampering with a single letter that passed through her hands, but gifted with a rapid and unhesitating faculty of induction, whereby she got as much from the direction, post-mark, weight, and general aspect of a letter, as many a duller mind from its whole contents. These three ladies were all the guests expected, and accordingly the proceedings of the evening began. It was not, however, till the meal was over, with much hospitality on one side, and appreciation on the other, that the

conversation took any turn that need interest us with reference to the story we have to tell. But then, as they gathered round the fire, Mrs Macgregor repeated to Mrs Caird a regret that she had before expressed. 'Eh, but it's a pity Mr John wadna leuk in upon us this evening. I mind how weel he liket the barley-scones, with sweet butter and plenty o' jelly; but to be sure he's past caring for sic things the noo. He'll maybe come for you, Mrs Caird, and tak a drap toddy and a bit kippered saumton to his supper. I like weel to look on his bonny face, sae grown as he is sin' he went awa to college. Ye're a lucky woman to hae sic a son.'

Mrs Caird sighed deeply. She was, as we have said, of a lugubrious spirit, and much as she loved her boy, she preferred to look upon him as an anxious responsibility rather than an out-and-out blessing. 'None but a mother can know, Mrs Macgregor, how great a burden I'm often called on to bear. There's so much sin and temptation at the college, and John's just so carried away by learning and what he calls philosophy—false philosophy, I misdoubt. I see a change on him that I'm wae to see. It's not so much his conduct; he's kept out of debt, I'll say that; but his clothes have a terrible wild cut about them; and say what I would, he let me go alone, last Sabbath afternoon, to worthy Mr Peddie's second discourse; and when I got home, there he was, just buried in some new book he'd got by Mr Senior. "What's that, John?" said I, for it had not the look of a right Sabbath book. "Metaphysics," said he, not so much as looking up. Metaphysics indeed! I doubt they're just another word for infidelity. It's seldom Mr Senior is seen in church or chapel.'

'He's an Englishman,' suggested kind Miss Mackay; 'maybe he'll no care for our worship.'

'Eh, but he's a pleasant man yon,' broke in Mrs Agnew, 'for a' he's an Englishman. It's wonderful what a smile he has—sic a bonny glint in his brown eyes, spreading all over his face, and leaving a light on it ever so long. It's no mickle he says to a body; but whiles he comes into the shop to get a parcel weighed, and a heavy one it often is. And of late there's been mony a letter for him with big seals, forbye ordinar anes, whilk are but few; and I'm thinking he'll be hearing something to his advantage some o' these neist days.'

'Nae doot, nae doot,' chimed in Mrs Macgregor. 'Mrs Forbes said to me nae further back than last Saturday: "I shall lose my lodger sune, Mrs Macgregor," said she. I wondered to see her smile the while, for ye'll mind how she took on when Mr Senior gaed awa last spring—just aboot the time Miss Teresa sickened. I woulna wonder if there's mair beneath it than meets the eye; and I'm sure I'm no ane to grudge at a neebor's good-luck.' And Mrs Macgregor stopped short, looking round at her friends with a sagacious smile, as though to invite them to commit themselves by some more definite observation than she chose to hazard.

Mrs Caird only sighed, and shook her head; but Miss Mackay followed the lead. 'That there is then, Mrs Macgregor, and the whole town will know it before many days are over our heads. It's but this evening I sent home a cap of real Valenciennes—I've had the lace by me ever since I set up, and no one would give me five shillings a yard—well worth it is and more, though a little yellow; but, said I, "Mrs Forbes, 'twill look all the richer trimmed with the white satin ribbon."'

But just then she was interrupted by a sharp rat-tat-tat, such as Mrs Macgregor's knocker was never known before to be capable of; and in came Mr Caird, or Mr John, as his old friend Mrs Macgregor preferred to call him—a young man of twenty, and a medical student of much promise at the university; in appearance and manner, an insufferable snob, or an uncommonly dashing fellow, according

to taste, for Mr John was in the very efflorescence of that chain-and-pin period, which youths of his class for the most part go through, and affected a certain reckless, dare-devil tone, though with a good true heart at bottom, and far more faith in his mother's teaching than he cared to let her know. His entrance caused a little commotion.

'Tea! oh, hang tea! No, no; a good stiff glass of toddy was the thing for me;' and while he was brewing it, Miss Mackay resumed: 'We were talking, Mr John, of a family near hand; I wonder whether you'll be guessing who. I mind, two years ago, how you'd be looking at a young lady's bonnet all through the minister's sermon, though what it was you saw in her, or what it is that Mr Senior has seen'—

'What are you driving at?' burst in the young man. 'Senior—Teresa; why, you're chaffing—you must be chaffing.'

'I do not know what that should mean, John,' solemnly interposed Mrs Caird, who never lost an opportunity of rebuking her son in company: 'no fit language, I fear; but a sorrowful truth it is that you little heeded good Mr Peddie's discourses, as Miss Mackay minds full well.'

'Oh, bother Mr Peddie, mother—an old woman's head-piece with the lungs of a mad bull!' ('Deed, then, and he does skirl!') chuckled Mrs Macgregor, who was herself staunch to the Establishment.) 'What is this about Senior?'

'Nae less than that he's to marry Teresa Forbes,' burst in the three ladies at once; their surmise once shared, ripening suddenly into certainty.

'Impossible! Why, they say he's to have the vacant chair at A——. Why, he's old enough to be her father!'

'Na, na, Mr John,' interrupted Mrs Agnew; 'that I gainsay. His hair is as brown as your ain; he'll nae be mair than thirty-five at the maist—he's whiles the leuk of a boy in his face when he smiles at you. And prond Miss Teresa may weel be, for it's an awfu' lift for her, and her aunt sae come down in the world. Eh, but I'd be sorry they had taken him in, as is but too likely, for I'll warrant he's gey simple for a' his book-larning.'

'Books indeed! books!' scoffed Mr John. 'He's had an eye for a pretty ankle. Cunning old cove. I'd wager my head it's all the old girl's doing, and that poor Teresa has had no voice in the matter.' And he gulped down his toddy with a sly look, but a sharp twinge of regret; for Teresa had been the dream of his boyhood, and in spite of much foolish braggadocio, that dream, in many a scene of temptation, had had power to keep him pure.

But to get at the true state of the case, we must not only cross the way to Mrs Forbes's superior residence, but go back four years in Mrs Forbes's history, and then we can better decide between Mrs Agnew's and Mr John's counter-theories, both of which sound plausible, yet neither of which may be true for all that. Four years ago, then, Mrs Forbes, a respectable widow lady—whose father was a laird, though a poor one, and whose husband, though but the captain of a trading-vessel, had contrived to leave her a snug little sum—received two letters by the same post, each of which occasioned her no slight disquiet. The one announced that the company in which her small capital had hitherto been profitably invested, was about to reduce its rate of interest by one and a half per cent. The second was from her only brother, a handsome ne'er-do-weel, whom she had not seen for years, but who, after selling their father's small patrimony, and running through what it had brought, had made his way to the continent, enlisted in the Austrian army, and married at Venice a young girl of mixed German and Italian descent. Every now and then, generally about New-year's Day, sometimes on her own birthday, Mrs Forbes would get a letter from this half-forgotten brother, telling of



some step he had gained, of his full satisfaction in his foreign wife, and of his love for his one little girl; always shewing a kindly interest in his sister's welfare, and proving that the man's career was worthier than his unsteady boyhood promised. Once there had come from him a beautiful mantle of Italian lace, and folded up carefully inside it was a large sheet of foreign paper, enclosing a thick wavy curl of true auburn hair from the little Teresa's head.

These letters were a great interest to Mrs Forbes, whenever they came, connecting her as they did with life and circumstances so different from her own. They afforded a species of excitement, something akin to what the latest novel wakes in us (but Mrs Forbes never read a novel), pleasantly stirring the vague poetical element, which she shared with the rest of her kind, though quite unconscious of it. Even this particular letter, of which we are about to speak, would not have been unwelcome, but for that other letter the post had brought. But the two together were certainly embarrassing. Her brother had lost his wife, his loving devoted Teresa; that was sad news to begin with. Then his regiment had been ordered off to the very heart of Hungary, and what was he to do with his little orphan girl of fourteen? He had had little time for decision, he said, and in his deep grief perhaps he had hardly been able to judge for the best. The child had relatives, indeed, on her mother's side, but they were fervent Catholics. He had not thought so much of these things as he ought; but he thought of them now. His own health was not strong, and if he never returned from this remote and, they told him, disturbed district, he would like that his little lassie should be brought up in old Scotland; and though it was twenty years and more since they had met, he knew that his sister Chrissy had still a warm heart towards him, and would be good to his bairn, for the sake of the old days when brother and sister read their Bible together at their mother's knee. A friend of his happened to be going to England at this very time; Teresa would travel with him, and he would see that she was safely sent on into Scotland. He thought she would arrive about ten days later than the letter.

An addition to the household, then, and an income, that seemed to have no margin before, still further reduced! Mrs Forbes rang the bell for her maid Janet, who had lived with her ever since her marriage; not that she exactly expected that Janet would help her out of her perplexity, being a woman of few ideas and fewer words—half 'doited,' some of the neighbours averred; but one must talk to somebody, and Mrs Forbes talked a great deal to her faithful servant.

'Janet, I am going to be a good deal poorer than I have been. I'm sure I don't know what I can do.'

'Deed, then, nor do I. Ye maun stop half my wage, and no be sae wastefu' wi' the tea. The pot was just awfu' strong when I got it this morning.'

'Janet, how can you say so, when you know your tea's the only thing you care about in the way of meals? But, O woman, we're to have one more mouth to feed! My brother's only daughter will be here in ten days' time.'

Janet's countenance relaxed. 'Hech! but it will be canty, a young step through the house.'

'But the expense, Janet?'

'Ye maun save ither ways. There's my wage, ye can stop a' thegither.'

'Not that; but, Janet, I can let lodgings.'

'Deed, no; and you a leddy born. It's verra weel for the like o' Mrs Agnew, but no for you.'

'But I will—I must. I'll put out a board at once: It's early for bathers, but I can try.'

Mrs Forbes did put out her board. A week later, Mr Senior took her two best rooms. A studious man—a briefless barrister, he said—who wanted little but fresh sea-air out of doors, and quiet within. Could Mrs Forbes promise him quiet? That she certainly

could. Henceforth, she carried on her colloquies with Janet in a whisper, and got shorter answers than ever, for Janet had a 'dour' temper, and resented the measure taken. It was, she thought, an open avowal of poverty, unbecoming a 'leddy born,' to which she would have preferred the greatest domestic straits.

A fortnight later, and Teresa arrived, a slight slip of a girl, with a sallow complexion and a small head, weighed down, it seemed, by its massy auburn hair; large blue eyes, with lids red and swollen by weeping. No beauty, certainly; the face too small, tapering too much at the chin: the face of a kitten, you would have said, but for that look of anguish in the blue eyes. They received her kindly, those good women, in their own way. Mrs Forbes tried to make her eat a good substantial Scotch meal, and to get her to admire Scotland. Janet put on a fire in her little room—a good inspiration but for the trick of smoking which that unused chimney had. Teresa was very shy, very silent, and when she answered them, they could hardly understand her, she spoke English with so foreign an accent, German being her mother-tongue. They heard her sob that night, as they listened at her door, heard her speak; it was well they did not understand the words—'Es ist grausam hier. Bin so ganz allein. Mutter, meine Mutter. Alles so leer, so kalt, so einsam!' But something in the very tone of the words made Mrs Forbes shake her head anxiously, and Janet grieve outright.

So matters went on for a time. Teresa hardly ever spoke. She would creep up stairs out of her aunt's parlour, and sit alone shivering in her little room, sometimes silent for hours, sometimes murmuring her passionate German sentences, and sobbing aloud. One day, Mr Senior, whose room was near, chanced to hear the unwonted sound. When Janet was taking away his dinner, he startled her by speaking, and asking its cause—scared her, she said, for he had never before shewn himself aware of Janet's conscious and rational existence, apparently regarding her as a mere apparatus connected with mutton-chops. 'It's a young lassie, niece to Mistress Forbes, frae some far awa country, and her mither was a German; and she's dead; and I'm thinking she'll no be lang for this world hersel', puir dumb lammie!'

'Dumb! I am sure I heard words as well as sobs.'

'There's no ane in a' C—, then, can tell scarce a word she says, and that's as bad as dumb, ony way,' said Janet, whipping off the table-cloth with asperity, for she was by no means favourably disposed to the lodger.

'Poor child, poor child!' said Mr Senior. 'Tell Mrs Forbes she may bring her in to speak to me, if she likes; I know a little German.' And he plunged back into his book.

Now, Janet considering, for her part, that the sooner missy forgot that outlandish tongue the better, nothing might have come of this good-natured proposition, but that the following day, Mr Senior, going out for his morning-ramble, met the poor girl creeping up to her solitary room. The wild woe in the eyes touched his kind heart at once. 'Das arme Kind,' he said, gently pushing the masses of hair away from the pale, tear-stained face, and his dark, deep-set eyes softening into ineffable pity. The young girl started at the familiar words, the gentle touch. Here she should be understood. Clasp her hands together, she poured forth her heart's too heavy burden. Her mother, her beautiful mother, she said, was dead; her kind father gone away, far away, to die, as she thought, and she herself sent alone to this foreign land, where all was so cold and bare—where the sky and sea were only cloud and roar—no sun, no blue in either—where they had such hard faces, and spoke in so rough a language—where she was of no use to any one, and no one loved her—oh it was too much! Should she be able to die? Did grief ever kill the young? Every night she prayed to die. All this, and more, she

poured forth in a very passion of words and sobs, but with the blue eyes fixed on Mr Senior's with something of wistful hope. He did not say much in reply, but his eyes moistened, and there spread over his face that singular irradiation which we have heard Mrs Agnew notice in his smile. He answered her in German, bade her hope and work. First of all, she had to learn English, for her father's sake; it was his tongue; and she must believe that the sun could shine even here for the young—would shine for her again, and life grow dear. And tenderly passing his hand over the drooping head, he ran rapidly down stairs.

Teresa stood there for a little while; then, instead of going on to her own room, turned back to the kitchen, where Janet was about to prepare Mr Senior's dinner. 'Who is dat Herr?' said the young girl with unwonted animation.

Janet looked up surprised, and shook her head.

'Dat man; no, he is not man. How say you Herr? He go down from above—out—out there—so;' and with rapid gesture, and her little hand firmly grasping Janet's bony arm, she contrived to work her meaning into the good woman's head.

'The Gude presarve us! what has come over the lammie? Why, it's naebody but Mr Senior, who is living here this summer. Mrs Forbes was so kind as let her rooms to him, missy, whilk was a comedown for such as she'—

'Lives he then here? Always here?' interrupted the child.

'Well, he's here the noo,' replied Janet; 'and I'm going to get his dinner ready, ye see.'

'I will helfen. How say you his name?'

'Just Mr Senior,' granted Janet.

'Say it one other more!' pleaded Teresa.

'It's a puir name to say; but you'll hear it often enough fra Mrs Forbes; she's uncommon taken up about him; and it's "Mr Senior's dinner," and "Mr Senior's fire," till I'm just fashed wi' him—no but he's a quiet-like body too. But eh! I'm pleased to see ye, missy, wi' the bit colour in your wee facie!'

Teresa looked up with something like a smile; then gathering all the peace into her lap, began to shell them with much care and deliberation, while inwardly repeating to herself as close an imitation as she could of the name Janet had given her. From that hour she began to revive. These young hearts, so infinite in their power to suffer, have a blessed compensation in their readiness to heal. The feeling of life which makes early sorrows so poignant, is also incompatible with their long duration. So it is! First comes the wild storm, and the thunder, rain, with bursts of sunshine brighter than before; later on, no more storm, only the quiet cloud, the silent mist, but they last throughout the remainder of the day! Some train of thought like this may have been dimly fitting across Janet's mind, as ejaculating, 'Did ye ever! Eh, but they're awsome strange, these young lassies. Ye never ken what airt to look to for change of weather—sune up, sune doon,' she proceeded to put on 'the brose.' Meanwhile, Mr Senior was wandering along the shore, wrapped in his own favourite and absorbing speculation, and no more thinking about Teresa than the sun thinks of the smallest daisy that has opened out its rose-tipped petals to his warmth ninety-five million of miles below.

The next three years passed away with but little of outward occurrence to mark them for any of the dwellers under Mrs Forbes's roof. Each, however, had a special way of reckoning time, and to none had it appeared long. To Mr Senior, the days and months were marked by progress in the pursuit of philosophical truth, which was the passion of his life. Yet not always by progress either. There were dark seasons when the thinking of years seemed to have sprung from some erroneous inference, and each giddy step had to be retraced, each difficulty grappled with

anew. But meanwhile, the few sheets of manuscript that lay upon his desk when first Teresa came, had swelled to a thick pile the desk would hardly close over.

As for Mrs Forbes, she had had for systematic pursuit that respectable struggle to make both ends meet, which those amongst us similarly occupied know to be a sure preventive against any sense of ennui. The liberal rent which Mr Senior paid for those two upstairs-rooms did indeed a good deal more than compensate for the diminished rate of interest, but then there was the additional expense entailed by Teresa, towards which her brother had as yet contributed little. So there were estimates to be made at the beginning of every month, and ingenious expedients for keeping within them, and these gave Mrs Forbes occupation enough, and that lent cheerfulness, which springs from a successful struggle. Janet's great era was the arrival of our missy, to whom she had attached herself with all the rough tenderness of her nature; and the most prominent event of the intermediate years was the scalding of her leg one luckless winter-day, which—the burn being treated according to her own pharmacopoeia, with several unguents of a complex but pre-eminently greasy character—led at length to a 'sair, sair income,' and 'fashed her ever sin', making it irksome to her to go much up and down stairs. And as for Teresa, she, too, had her own special system of dividing time. Her early years, with their many joys, and their one sharp sorrow, seemed to lie far away—a region of myth, separated from her actual life by a sharp line of demarcation her imagination was less and less frequently taxed to cross. The horror of her first arrival shrank almost out of sight. Surely her conscious existence began that day she met Mr Senior first, when he spoke to her so gently, and laid his hand like a blessing on her head. From that hour, the young girl had been his bond-slave. Hers was a singular nature altogether, with its passionate overflow of tenderness, and its somewhat morbid tendency to concentration, which she owed perhaps to her mixed descent, and which the circumstances of the last few years had done much to foster. Good Mrs Forbes, faithful Janet, called forth a quiet sense of gratitude, but nothing more; the girls she had met at the classes to which she had been sent, shocked her innate refinement by their loud voices and boisterous mirth; their brothers were more repugnant still; worthy Mr Peddie had upon her spirits the effect that the east wind and sea-fog had had upon her arrival; at the sight of Mrs Caird's weeds, she shuddered as at an open grave; and the look of boyish admiration in John Caird's honest young face, roused a haughty sense of indignation she would not have known how to shape into words. But Mr Senior! he so great and wise—oh! she did not need that the neighbours should whisper round of the books he had written—he so gentle and so good—why, all her being was but one thought of him—a thought that grew and strengthened with her growth and strength, she reasoning upon it the while as little as upon the rounding of her slight figure to a richer symmetry, or the clearer colouring put by the northern breezes into her delicate face. Enough for her that every day she saw him; that, sitting there at work in her little room, she could hear his footsteps pacing up and down; that sometimes he spoke to her; more than once—O condescension!—had bidden her bring her books to him, had corrected her pronunciation, or made plain to her the meaning of what she had read.

Best of all, that she was allowed to serve him, her skilful needle being often employed on his behalf; and since Janet's lameness, the privilege of answering his bell having devolved upon her. 'Deed, and our missy has wings to her feet. It's just a mairvel to me how thoctful she is, aye minding to spare my leg,' said



the unsuspecting Janet. All the days in Teresa's calendar were now very good, but some—those on which Mr Senior had oftenest looked up at her with a smile—were hearts' holy days indeed; nay, on one transcendent occasion he had called her 'Dear!' O the music and the sunshine, the sweetness and the glow! Talk of romance as past and gone, or seek to confine it to any special sphere! Why, that quiet girl, with her little tray, laying down the plates noiselessly as snow-flakes, for that middle-aged student in that commonplace room, had within her the very same feeling that has prompted the noblest deeds of heroic times; would have walked up to the cannon's mouth, if need were, to save one hair of that thoughtful head from injury, as simply and undoubtingly as she set about her daily work now.

But in this quiet life there was a change, at hand, one of which Teresa had never thought at all, though it was the most natural thing in the world. The marvel really was how a man like Mr Senior should have buried himself so long in these dull rooms in this obscure town; not that he should at length be thinking of leaving them. He had taken them at first week by week, then on and on, till weeks had swelled into years, their only significant record to him being that bulky manuscript, to which the last line had just been added.

It was a fine day in early summer, and he had returned from his ramble with a feeling of unwonted exhilaration. The labour of years was finished. That book once published, he should not have lived quite in vain. Teresa was in his room, lifting away books and papers with reverent care, before she brought up the tea-things. 'Who will ever replace you, little ministering spirit, with your quiet step and your dainty ways? One must miss you much.'

Such a glad beating of the heart, she could not answer quite at once: 'I am not going away, sir.'

'No, but I am. Will you inform your aunt that business takes me suddenly to London; that I give up my snug rooms in a week's time—but I leave early to-morrow?'

No answer, only a gasping for breath. Looking up, he saw that she was fainting, had just time to catch her before her fall, and to lay her on the sofa; then he ran down to Mrs Forbes's parlour. Mrs Forbes was out. Should he summon Janet? No; he recoiled from that; the child would soon revive. The child! oh, she was no child that fair creature lying there. For the first time he sees her as she really is. Her long hair has broken away in heavy masses from the slight comb that held it up—the blue eyes are nearly closed. What a depth of shadow their long lashes cast on the smooth white cheek! She has fainted quite away. He wheels the sofa to the open window, chafes the little lifeless hands, kisses the cold brow with something of a father's tenderness. This delicate graceful form, it pains him to think that it should ever have undergone any fatigue for him. Stay! she revives—he is glad he did not call Janet—the colour is returning to her lips—she tries to rise. 'Lie still, dear Teresa.' Her eyes open—how deep their blue is! As they meet his, very, very slowly the tears gather. 'You are not well, poor child. You have been over-exerting yourself. I am glad I am going away—you will have less trouble.' He is glad he is going away! The tears are frozen by the bitter words; he fears she is going to faint again. 'I shall be very anxious about you, Teresa. I shall often think of you, and wonder how you are getting on.' How she smiles on him! What worship there is in those blue eyes! He sees their beauty only. Where is his insight, his knowledge of human nature? He would do anything he could to cheer her; but he is so utterly in the dark, ten to one his next words will only give her further pain. 'I hope some kind pleasant ladies will be the next occupants of these rooms—not a dull recluse, not a book-worm like myself. You will all

be glad to get rid of me. You are better now; you feel that you can walk down stairs? You should go to bed at once, poor child. You will not, of course, think of rising to-morrow. I shall be off too early. Janet will see to me. I will say good-bye now. *Leben Sie wohl, liebes Mädchen.*' He took her hand kindly. Did his lips touch her hair? She thought so; but everything turned round as the door closed; and making her way to her own little room, she very nearly fainted away again.

When Mrs Forbes returned from a long friendly chat with Mrs Macgregor over the way, she found unwelcome tidings awaiting her—Mr Senior was to leave very early the next morning. How strangely sudden! though, to be sure, he had only taken the lodgings from week to week all these years, stipulating after the first month or so for the power of giving them up whenever he liked. It was a grievous loss, though. However, the last letter from Hungary did enclose a remittance, and hinted at some bright prospect, to be further explained in the next. 'We must hope for the best, Janet. We could not expect that Mr Senior would stay with us always. Don't look so dour about it.'

'It's no about that; he may gang to the world's end for me. But missy is no in her ordinar' the night. I dinna ken what's come over her. She's white, white, and trembles as if she'd seen a ghaist.'

'Dear, dear,' said Mrs Forbes, 'I hope it's not fever. Mrs Macgregor has been telling me of several cases;' and she hurried up to her niece's room, where the poor girl had taken shelter again, after making the necessary communication to Janet. There she lay pale and shivering; but she would not—she could not tell what the blow was that had so shattered her. She instinctively felt that no one would understand; perhaps they would laugh. She had heard them laugh at Miss Mackay about some minister who had once lodged at her house. No one should ever know. She could have told him, she thought, better than any one else; yet when she was with him, she could not speak a word, not even when he said 'Dear Teresa!' Recalling the low, deep-toned voice, the tears came more freely, and brought some relief. She truly told her aunt that her head ached violently, but told her no more; she begged to have the room darkened, and to be left quite alone. Mrs Forbes went down comforted that there was as yet no fear in the case, though still rather uneasy, but without the slightest suspicion of the truth. How blind we often are to what goes on under our own roof!—how slow to discover a fact where we have never suspected a probability! All night long, the poor girl wept; when the morning came, she did not dare to rise and prepare Mr Senior's early breakfast. He had forbidden her to do so, and in the hurry of departure he might not speak to her so tenderly as last night he did. '*Leben Sie wohl, liebes Mädchen,*' he had said. Watching at her window, she saw him leave the house, and then turn round to look at the rooms he had so long occupied. Did he remember her? She thought he did. She must live upon that last look, those last words; and she should not live long—that was a blessing! The house seemed to her already a tomb; but when, pale and tottering, she went into the deserted room, she found, to her unspeakable relief, that all traces of the beloved presence were not removed. There were several of his books still there, and, more, there was a slip of paper directed to her. 'Would she allow these heavy, lumbering volumes to remain a while in the book-shelves? he would send for them some not very distant day.' His books—those on which his dark eyes had rested, the pages which his hands had turned! She would read them all before she died; and she *did* read them. Scientific disquisitions, metaphysical treatises, grave histories, a few odd volumes of Shakspeare and Shelley—she read them

all, lured on by frequent pencil-notes on the margin, which always threw light on the text. It may be asked, what could so slenderly educated a girl gather from such works as these? But hers was not an ordinary mind, and, at all events, those books, that set her thinking as she had never thought before, were all the solace of her life; only the bodily health drooped sadly. The unwonted mental effort, the rising at daybreak to these precious studies—which she did not like her aunt even to guess at—the hunger and thirst of the poor bereaved heart—all these told upon her frame; she grew thin and wan, a blue ring darkened round the blue eyes. The neighbours shook their heads, and wondered Mrs Forbes was so slow to call in Dr MacLagan, even after Miss Teresa had all but fainted away in the kirk. The fact was, that the good woman had not only an economical dread of doctor's bills, but a sincere horror of doctors, and, had Teresa been her own child, would have felt just as little inclined to call one in; but one day she got alarmed herself. She had had a letter from her brother, telling her good tidings indeed. He had been fortunate enough to save the colonel of his regiment from a brutal attack of the insurgent peasantry, and for his brave conduct on the occasion, had not only been promoted by the general in command, but the colonel, an old man, and childless, had said he should henceforth look upon him as his adopted son. Further, he hoped soon to return to Venice, and then he would send for Teresa. When Mrs Forbes came to this part of the letter, she looked up to her niece's face for a smile of delight, and was shocked to see a deadly pallor overspread it. 'There's something ails the lassie more than common, or she would brighten up at such good news of her father,' was the conclusion to which she came; and when she next met Dr MacLagan in the street, she asked him just to come in and take a look at Teresa. After much feeling of her pulse, and listening to the beating of her heart, the doctor looked rather grave; but he sent no doctor's stuff, only prescribed plenty of fresh air and exercise, and, above all, 'to keep her mind easy.' 'Keep her mind easy, indeed!' said Mrs Forbes to Janet—'the nonsense those doctors talk! If it had been me, now, with my anxieties and on-looking; but the poor lassie has not a care—how should she? She just lives on like a lily of the field, as we're all told to do.'

'Ay,' grunted Janet, 'the doctor's nae warlock. I'd ha'e thoct better of him if he'd ordered just a drap toddy, to pit some colour into the poor lammie's white face.'

The summer had now worn on and on, till the September-days closed in short and dull. Teresa faded like the flowers, but still went about as usual. One afternoon, when she was dusting and re-arranging the books so sacred to her, she was startled by a ring at the bell; like Mr Senior's bell, but that could not be—that was impossible. No; that is his voice at the door; she hears Janet bid him 'just go ben' and take them. It is he; he has come for his books. He started when he saw her kneeling there—he had met Dr MacLagan, who had shaken his head about her—but so pale, so hollow-eyed, so changed; he had not expected this. Helping her to rise—'You have been ill; you have not been taking care of yourself, Teresa.' The tender voice—the voice she had so yearned to hear once more—she hears it, she is not dreaming; the joy is too great for words. 'I have come back for my books, Teresa, come back for one night, just to have a look at my old haunts. I am staying at the hotel till to-morrow. I have been asked to stand for the vacant chair at A—. If I get it, we shall not be very distant from each other. I shall run over sometimes to little quiet C—.'

Quick as lightning, her father's letter, her probable recall to Italy, flash through her mind. No, she cannot bear it. She is at his feet: 'I love you—I have

always loved you! It is not life without you! Take me with you where you go; I will be your servant. Oh, I can work; I will get strong. Take me with you, or I die—I die.'

If the Scotch carpet at Mr Senior's feet had yawned into a hideous abyss; if the sea-breeze that blew in had carried him off on its wings through that open window; if any other portent more remarkable still had suddenly occurred, he could not have been more utterly amazed. But the first impulse of his generous nature was to screen the poor suppliant from all eyes and ears less tender than his own. He raised her, tried to calm her, promised her that she should see him again—that she should not be parted from him; implored her to hide her agitation from her aunt—not to speak to her on the subject; said he would return on the morrow; rushed down stairs, calling out to Janet that he had taken the books he wanted, and would send the next day for the rest, and went back to the hotel, there to pace up and down through one of the most distracted nights that ever fell to metaphysician's lot. Teresa was a long time sleepless too, but only from too great happiness. She should go with him then, and be his servant. He had promised her that she should not be parted from him. There came, indeed, from time to time a shuddering fear of what her aunt or her father might say; but his promise seemed to her stronger than any obstacle, and she fell asleep, to dream sweet dreams of life-long service.

The next morning Mr Senior called early, and asked to see Mrs Forbes. What that worthy woman's amazement was when he proceeded to ask her consent to his marriage with her niece Teresa, no judicious story-teller would embarrass himself by trying to describe. 'You have no objection, Mrs Forbes; you do not anticipate any from her father?'

'Oh, sir, I'm just unable to say what I think of the poor girl's good-fortune—the honour to us all; and I can answer for my brother as for myself, but she's such a strange lassie. I've never rightly known what to make of her, and she'll maybe not view it in a right light.'

'You think me too old for her?' rejoined Mr Senior, rejoicing that Teresa's secret was safe.

'No, sir, not one day too old. But she's just so unlike other girls, and of late she's been so frail and tearful. She may have thought of dying, but I do not think such a thing as marriage has ever crossed her head.'

'You will let me speak to her, then; and if she answers as we wish, we will keep our own counsel, Mrs Forbes. I will return to my old quarters. I have a good deal of writing before me, and the wedding can be got over some morning quickly, without any one being the wiser. I think we shall all prefer that.'

That day-month was the occasion of Mrs Macgregor's tea-party, and as we have seen, spite of all precautions taken, the neighbours were not without some inkling of what was going on. While they were discussing the matter, Mr John Caird and Mrs Agnew each stoutly maintaining the reasonableness of their own point of view, Mr Senior sits busily writing in the long-accustomed room, page after page getting quickly covered over. He is writing the lectures he will have to deliver at A— at the opening of the session in November. Teresa sits near him, but a little out of his sight; she has a piece of work in her hand, but she has dropped it to watch that grand thoughtful brow contracting for a few moments over the deep-set eyes, then smooth as marble again, as the clear, forcible words crystallise round the supple thought, and the pen flies on faster than before. Teresa sits rapt in speechless worship. The fire-light is playing on the glossy coils of her auburn hair, the roundness of the smooth cheek, the delicate curve of the parted lips.

By and by, Mr Senior throws down his pen and pushes those close-covered sheets away. 'Teresa!' She is there—she is kneeling before him, she is looking with those innocent blue eyes into his. 'You should be more to me than all my books,' he sighs, bending down to the fair fragrant face.

Two or three days later, they were married.

#### NATURAL HISTORY AT OUR TERRACE.

A LARGE volume on natural history might be written without going further for materials than to the margin of the nearest duck-pond; indeed, something of the sort has been already done, and a duck-pond has been shewn to be one of the most populous and interesting of vivariums, abounding in wonders, and full of facts profoundly interesting to the scientific man. Unfortunately, I am not a scientific man myself, and should cut but a poor figure in a duck-pond; but I am in some sort a man of observation, and have noted some phases in natural history occurring in an area something less in extent than an average duck-pond—namely, the little back-garden in the rear of the house in which I dwell. Said back-garden is about thirty-five feet in length, and eighteen feet in width: it is surrounded on three sides by brick walls, and on the fourth by the kitchen, which projects from the house, and, in common with all the houses on the Terrace, has a flat leaden roof. The back of the house faces the west, and the three garden-walls the north, south, and east. Over the end-wall, which is but five feet high on the garden-side, but about fifteen on the other, rise a row of poplars, whose foliage in summer forms an agreeable screen in that quarter, but shuts out the sunshine from the few flowers growing in the borders beneath. It is only in the borders that anything can be planted, the centre of the small area being a gravelled parallelogram. On the wall which faces the south, a vine has been trained, bearing sweet-water grapes, and some of the branches extend over the western front of the kitchen, festooning the window with the quivering leaves and pendent branches of fruit.

During the winter, all in this Islington garden appears dead and motionless, and the only signs of life discernible are certain colonies of snails which have taken up their quarters in holes in the wall, where portions of the bricks have fallen out, and which wall has been suffered to go partly to decay, rather than injure the vine by its reparation. The snails are not quite safe, however, for more than once, on looking out in the dawn of a winter's morning, I have seen the thrush, who never comes near us in summer, poking his head into their holes, and impaling them on his bill. The slightest alarm will scare away the hungry bird, who throws himself over the wall, and is seen no more. When the warm spring comes, the snails gradually move off, and spend the summer elsewhere, infesting the garden very little, if at all.

*House-sparrows.*—These, by far the ugliest and most impudent of all British birds, swarm in London and the suburbs at all seasons, and are said to number double the amount of the human population within the sound of Bow bells. In the fall of the year, and throughout winter, they congregate, about two hours before sunset, in the nearest trees, and there make such a din as drowns at times even the roar of London streets. It is from this cause that so many trees in the front grounds of suburban villas, which would otherwise be allowed to grow to their fair proportions, are mutilated and cut down to shapeless trunks. The sparrows in such myriads in a large tree are an intolerable nuisance, while their droppings poison the air. They are kept down in the poplars at the end of the Terrace gardens by the Terrace cats, who promenade the top of the wall, and scale the trees after them,

bagging them easily during their conclaves. When pairing-time comes in the spring, the sparrows, in their eagerness to build, will fight like tigers for a site for the nest. Year after year, they build in the open mouth of the waste-pipe from the roof, and as regularly lose a portion of their brood by the sudden showers which wash them away. Their nests are most slovenly affairs, and generally fall to pieces by the time they are done with.

*Earth-worms.*—These gentry manifest their presence chiefly in the central square of gravel, by boring their way up in the night, and leaving numberless small mounds or worm-casts, disfiguring the surface. Early in the morning, the sparrows, and now and then a robin, may be seen making havoc among them. It is not a pleasant sight to watch the little redbreast gorging a stout vigorous worm as thick and as long as a black-lead pencil. It is a work of no small time or trouble, either, to get him into the crop; and the struggles of the worm, even after he is bagged, threaten for a time to burst his living cerements, so that robin has to straddle his legs to save himself from being toppled over. He seems, however, proud of his exploit, and generally mounts a tree and commences a song as soon as it is accomplished. In the fall of the year, when the ground is covered with the dying leaves of the poplar-trees, the worms perform an exploit which has puzzled me not a little, both as to how, and for what purpose it is done. The poplar leaves are large, averaging from six to seven inches in length; and they have not been long on the ground before I find them in the morning rolled up into cylinders by the worms, and in this form, lining their holes to the depth of from two to five inches, the remaining inch or so sticking out of the soil. A hundred times have I pulled them out, and unrolled them for the purpose of examination: in some cases, I have found a part of the leaf eaten away; in others, it was quite entire; and it is impossible to say whether the part eaten was the food of the worm, or of slugs or insects previously feeding on it. If the leaf be not disturbed, the whole will disappear underground in a few days. It may be that this is a provision of food against the winter season, but how the thing takes place, it is not easy to imagine, and the process cannot be watched.

*Spiders.*—The old wall on which the vine is trained is the home of various sorts of spiders, who commence their activities with the warm weather. Some of them spread their nets over every orifice in the bricks, with the view, perhaps, of catching such winged insects as have taken refuge within during the cold weather; others, of the same species, cover the surface of the old bricks with a thin slimy film of web, which entangles the feet of minute flies or beetles, who thus fall a prey to them. In the hot summer days, the hunter-spider, a gray, stone-coloured, thick-legged, weasen-bodied fellow, is on the alert after blue-bottles, house-flies, or even smaller prey. His mode of hunting is most reckless: he takes up his position on a vine-leaf, where he lurks under cover, crouching quite motionless sometimes for the hour together. If a fly settles on the leaf, or even on another leaf within six or eight inches of him, he disappears instantaneously, and so does the fly. I remarked this many times before suspecting what happened—the flight of the creature being so rapid that beyond his instantaneous vanishing I could discern nothing; but as the fly vanished also, I conjectured they must both go together. After frequent investigations, I found this to be the case. The hunter throws himself on his prey with the speed of light, and is by the force of his leap projected, together with his victim, into the air; but to save his neck, and his plunder, he attaches his web to the leaf ere darting off, and is thus brought up before touching the ground. It is curious to notice how exactly he measures the distance, often falling within an inch of the soil, but never touching it. If,



after he has thus suddenly disappeared, you pass your finger round the lower edge of the leaf from which he started, you will invariably bring him up with his prey struggling in his grasp. He is not generally in a hurry to return to his lair, and unless his prize be very small, prefers to kill it and feast on it as it hangs, only quitting the carcass when it is sucked dry; with a gnat, however, or a small fly, he will climb the rope to his starting-point, and there make his meal. He is audaciously reckless and rapacious, and will attack other spiders, as well as insects, sometimes to the loss of his own life in such assaults.

About the beginning of September, the garden-spinners begin to cover all approaches to the vine with their radiating nets—thus preserving the fruit from flies. They will complete one of these snares fourteen inches in diameter in the course of a forenoon, and if it be then destroyed, will renew it again by eventide. The long radiating ropes which connect it to its supports are thick, strong, and non-elastic, and not being viscous, may be handled without injury; but the close cross-bars which unite them together are so slimy as to adhere to everything with which they come in contact, and so elastic as to bear stretching to twenty times their normal length. If, while the spinner is at work on her snare, you alarm her by interfering with a twig or straw, she instantly drops to the ground, and running rapidly to a portion of the soil that is of the same colour as her own body, coils herself up to simulate a pellet of earth, when you must have sharp eyes to identify her. If she has finished her web, instead of dropping off when alarmed, she runs to her lair, which she has made by curling a leaf funnel-wise and fastening it so with her web. As the autumn advances, the spinner catches abundance of game, and grows hideously burly and fat. You may see her in October swaddling the long-bodied crane-fly in her deadly filaments, and afterwards sucking at his vitals for seven or eight hours at a stretch. When she has arrived at these bloated proportions, she is very often attacked by the hunter, who may be seen watching her lair, and prowling round the adjacent leaves where she is accustomed to take the air. Several times have I witnessed a pitched battle, always to the death, between these blood-thirsty foes. By October, the hunter has grown as big as the spinner, bating the rotundity of belly; and if she comes out fairly from her lair, he will assail her, while she, on her part, never declines the combat. He launches himself at her head or breast in sudden darts, retiring as quickly, while she strives to catch him with her claws, rearing herself up for that purpose. If she succeeds in grappling him fast, she rolls over and over, and so entangles him in her web, now exuding from all her spinnarets, that he is reduced to a mummy in a few seconds, and it is all over with him. When she has thus wrapped him up, she bears him off to her lair, and sucks him as dry as if he were a blue-bottle. On the other hand, however, she is sometimes sorely put to it in the fight, and I have seen her beat a retreat to her lair, whither the hunter will not follow her at the time, but where I have reason to think she dies of her wounds, and serves to feed her conqueror; for after battles of this sort in which she has been beaten, I have noticed her web deserted, and the poor flies caught in it left to struggle out if they can, or to perish from hunger. There is a report, I believe sometimes endorsed by naturalists, to the effect that the garden-spinner, though tenderly careful of her young, devours her husband. I have a suspicion that her battles with the hunter, whom she sometimes does devour, but not always, are the only foundation for this report. At any rate, I have watched her behaviour for years, and have never known her, while free, to attack any of the spider race, unless first attacked. When imprisoned, the case is different: put any number of spinners under a glass, with nothing else to prey upon, and ere long they will

fight and devour one another, until the strongest alone survives.

*Cryptogamia.*—For nearly a year, the house next door was uninhabited, and there was consequently no servant-girl to holly-stone the flags leading from the garden-gate to the door. One morning, on going out, I was struck with the impression on the flag-stones, in a lighter tint than the stones themselves, of an exact representation of the iron gate, with its cross-bars and lance-headed rails. Day by day, for some time, the impression grew more vivid, and was remarked by others as well as myself; and some absurd guesses were hazarded as to the cause of it. In a few days after it was most vivid, it disappeared suddenly and completely; and those who had noticed it, myself among the rest, began to doubt whether we had seen such a phenomenon at all. But in a short time it came again, and this time it was so plain as to be quite unmistakable, and to challenge the attention of passers-by. On procuring the key of the gate, and proceeding to examine the thing more closely, I found the stone covered with an exceedingly minute growth of cryptogamia, which was easily scraped off with a knife, and which, when it was removed, brought away the impression with it. I soon found out that the impression was due to a light burning all night long in an upper window of one of the opposite villas, which throwing the shadow of the gate and rails on the flags, produced etiolation in that portion of the minute vegetable growth which was thus darkened. The disappearance of the impression was due to a few hours of sunshine occurring in the damp season, which parched up the whole growth; and its more vivid recurrence was consequent on the return and longer continuance of the damp weather. Here was a mystery which in the good old times might have set a whole parish by the ears, and have provoked them to witch-burning to ease their minds.

*Bees.*—There are no bee-hives within a couple of miles of the Terrace gardens, but during the season of flowers, the honey-bees are daily visitors to the spot, although there is not much to tempt them beyond a few lilies, nasturtiums, larkspurs, and patches of mignonette, with the addition occasionally of such full-blown potted flowers as we are seduced to buy of the travelling-gardeners. I have only one thing to remark touching the honey-bees, and that is as to their mode of operation with the larkspurs. In this flower, the minute morsel of sweets they desiderate lies at the bottom of the long spur which gives the plant its name, and is so far down that it cannot be reached by the proboscis of the worker, who is therefore obliged to get at it another way. In fact, he never attempts to fathom the inside of the long tube with his snout, but turns his attention to the outer extremity, which he saws off in the neatest manner, thus laying bare the treasure, and helping himself. So small is the portion severed, that the flower does not appear injured by the operation, and it is only by close inspection that the theft can be discovered. I have watched this singular manœuvre again and again, and have observed that the flowers are suffered to become quite full blown before undergoing amputation, the bees returning to the plant from time to time, until the whole of its produce is secured. The honey-bee, however, is not, I suspect, the only bee who visits us: that old standard rose-tree which never bears anything better than a blighted bud—the soil of Islington being incapable of maturing a complete rose—yet bears evidence of the visits of the leaf-cutter bee, in the form of circular holes, or rather sections of circular holes, from which disks or parts of disks of the leaf have been cut away. So far as my experience goes, this geometrical gentleman, whether he cuts a complete disk or a part of one, never leaves the leaf entire round the abstracted portion, always forming a part of the outline with the edge of the leaf. Further, I have never succeeded in catching

him at work, and, of course, therefore, could not swear the trespass against him in a court of law.

*Caterpillars.*—In the south-west corner of the patch, overshadowed by the poplars, stands a lilac-tree, which bears bonny bunches of flowers in the early summer, but whose lower leaves become withered at the tips before August is gone, presenting a wofully shabby appearance. On examining the leaves, it is found that they are each one rolled up at the extremity, and retained in that position by thin silky filaments, and that the internal space is the home of an ill-looking pale-green caterpillar, who has preyed on the soft fibre and juices of the leaf, and thus reduced it to its deplorable condition. The low-growing leaves of the tree only are thus infested—while those rising above four or five feet from the ground, and thence to the top of the tree, where the sparrows are apt to congregate, are free from them.

*Locusts.*—A few summers ago, some straggling monsters of the locust tribe were blown by a south wind across the gardens and suburbs of Islington. Some of them fell to the lot of Our Terrace, and I caught two, the larger of which measured three inches and an eighth, while the smaller wanted an eighth of the three inches. Wishing to preserve them, and not liking to kill them cruelly, I put them into an old envelope-box, thinking 'They'll die of themselves if you let 'em alone.' I forgot them for three days, and then, on opening the box, discovered that the larger had killed the smaller one, and devoured him almost to the last visible particle, nothing being left save the antennæ, a few minute fragments of the legs and of the thin shelly armour. The survivor did not appear much the fatter for his meal, nor had he apparently increased in size.

*Cats.*—The cats of Our Terrace exist under peculiar circumstances, which are doubtless pleasant to themselves, but are demoralising in the result. I have stated already that the kitchens project in the rear, each under a flat leaden roof; this gives to the thirty-odd houses some two hundred yards of promenade, over which the cats have free warren. The result is, that in fine weather they are never at home; and during summer, they would hardly be at home at all, were it not for the forenoon visits of their commissariat, the catmeat-man, whose cry about eleven o'clock summons them all to the front-doors. Thus, they are quite a different race from the citizen's cat, little given to the rug at the fireside, and still less to petting and nursing. They breed out of doors, and, to their disgrace be it said, often eat their own offspring. They slaughter the sparrows by hundreds when the young are first learning to fly, pouncing on them from their lairs in the poplars with unerring aim. Owing to their vagabond habits, they generally get left behind when the householders of the Terrace move off elsewhere; in which case, an outcast cat will look out for a vacancy, and cautiously induct herself into it when it occurs, in spite of all opposition. When my old favourite, 'Stalker,' died a few winters back, I installed a Skye terrier in his place, resolving to have done with cats; but this was not allowed—the demise of Stalker got wind, and in due course a substitute made her appearance at the kitchen-fire, and, spite of Rough the terrier, made good her position. What is inexplicable, Rough, who hunts all the other cats, and sends them flying, became speedily reconciled to the intruder, and even allows her to take the meat out of his mouth, which she does not scruple to do whenever so disposed.

*Gnats.*—Of all the insects frequenting the garden, and their name is legion, the most long-lived and enduring appear to be the gnats, whose larvæ, by the way, are rather too abundant in the water-butt. Long after the blue-bottles, bees, crane-flies, and moths have all disappeared, the gnats in swarms are seen disporting in the air, and playfully chasing each other under the shelter of the walls. As late as the

beginning of December, have I seen troops of them thus enjoying themselves, and it is not until the frost sets in in earnest, that they finally vanish.

*Grapes.*—A last word on the subject of our vine. For now nearly twenty years, it has borne a good crop of grapes every autumn, and not more than three years out of the twenty has the fruit failed to ripen—though the ripening, which generally takes place at the end of September, has sometimes been deferred to the beginning of November. Other exposed vines, growing within a few furlongs, have met with a very different fate, often bearing no fruit at all, and for the most part losing their fruit by frost before it was ripe. The reason of this difference I take to be, that the Terrace gardens are by their position sheltered from the east and north winds, which cannot get at them. Does not this point to the conditions under which grapes might be grown in England in the open air with a good prospect of success? and if so, do not the required conditions already exist in those long miles of railway-cuttings running north and south, and north-west and south-east? I am convinced that if the slopes of these cuttings were planted with vines, and average care and attention were paid to their culture, securing to the fruit the reflected heat from the soil, they would yield excellent crops of grapes, fit either for table-fruit or conversion into wine.

#### SEVERAL SAINTS.

THE Protestants have abolished the saints, and only retained a sprinkling of mock-saints; but every true Roman Catholic still says his prayers before the likeness of his patron-saint, or of him under whose department the particular complaint of the moment may fall. The duties of the saints are regulated according to their supposed abilities.

St George, St Maurice, and St Michael are the patrons of nobility; the patron of the theologians is, queerly enough, the hard-believing apostle Thomas; and that of the pigs, St Antonius. St Ivo has jurisdiction over the lawyers. Physicians, in difficulties, address their patrons St Cosmus and St Damianus. Huntsmen, before bestriding their horses, recommend their necks to St Hubert; and when sitting down to dinner, to St Martin, the patron of tipplers—and a very zealous and careful gentleman he was. Each trade has its particular patron-saint, to whom Roman Catholic trades-people probably recommend their business, when the many holidays or pilgrimages prevent them from attending to it themselves. Each nation has also its patron. That of the Portuguese is St Anton. Since they are not very numerous, he protects them together with his principal clients, the swine. St James is the patron of the Spaniards; St Denis, of the French; and St George, of the English. The poor Venetians send their sighs to St Marc; and St Patrick is the patron of the Irish, as everybody knows.

Some saints, not sufficiently employed otherwise, affect particular branches. St Aja is an accomplished lawyer, and grants assistance—for a good fee, to the church of course—in lawsuits; St Cyprian helps against the gout; and St Florian is commander of Heaven's fire-brigade. St Benedict knows all about poison; and St Hubert, as a perfect sportsman, understands what to do in mad-dog cases. St Petronella cures fevers; St Rochers, the plague; St Ulric destroys rats and mice; St Apollonia cures toothache, if not coming from pregnancy, in which case ladies must address St Margaret, who is Heaven's midwife. St Blasius cures sore throats; St Valentine, epileptic

fits; St Lucia, sore eyes; while the veterinary surgeon among the saints is St Leonard.

The idea that it is meritorious to live as miserably as possible prevailed amongst the Christians of the first centuries; and after the persecutions under Diocletian and Decius, martyrdom became quite a rage among them. Such as could not reach it, tried at least to torment themselves as much as possible, and this fanaticism spread more and more among the Christians during the fourth century. Zeno, bishop of Verona (360), said: 'It is the highest glory of Christian virtue to tread nature under the feet,' and this was the leading principle of the time. It cast over the whole Christian world a gloom, the consequences of which are felt to the present day.

The wildernesses of Egypt and Syria were the favourite stages on which these self-tormenting Christians exhibited their performances. All tried to trample nature under their feet, and it is almost sickening to read of the manner in which they proceeded. One of those saints lived for fifty years in a subterranean cave, without seeing during all this time the genial light of the sun. Some had themselves buried up to their necks in the hot sand, and their uncovered heads exposed to the fierce sun of that country; others were embaled in furs, in which only a small hole was left for breathing; and one of them hewed a kind of shell out of the rock, which he carried about as a snail carries its house. Many of them were loaded with iron chains and weights, and St Eusebius had always two hundred and sixty pounds of iron about him. One of these poor maniacs pressed himself into the hoop of a carriage-wheel, and remained in this position for ten years; after which time he changed it for a very narrow cage. Others vowed not to speak one word for years; not to look on the face of man; to hop about on one leg; and to eat nothing but grass. Some slept on thorns, nay, many tried to dispense with sleep altogether; and all had an extraordinary faculty for living a long time without food. Every physician knows that this is very often the case with insane people. Simeon, the son of an Egyptian shepherd, ate only every Sunday, and wore round his waist a cord which was drawn so exceedingly tight as to produce wounds, from which emanated such a sickening smell, that nobody could stay with him. Not satisfied with this degree of misery, he placed himself on the top of a column, and remained there for years. The first column which he erected for this purpose was only four yards high; but his columns grew with his madness, and reached at last the height of forty yards. On this he stood for thirty years! It was one of his amusements and exercises to bow to the ground during his prayers; nor could the suppleness of his backbone have suffered from the exposure to the weather, for an eye-witness counted not less than 1277 of such bows following each other rapidly, and they were continued for a longer time, after the spectator was tired of counting them. Simeon at last succeeded in existing forty days without food. When his emaciated body had no longer strength to stand on his column, he had a pole erected on it, to which he was attached by chains in an erect position. This kind of devotion found many imitators.

An eye-witness, who observed the lives of those desert saints during a whole month, has left us the following description of them: 'Some, with their eyes turned up towards heaven, pray with sighs and whining for mercy; others, their hands tied on their back, think themselves not worthy to look up to heaven, sit on the ground among ashes, hide their

faces between their knees, and strike their heads against the ground; others are howling as at the death of a beloved person; others reproach themselves for not being able to shed tears enough. Their body is, as David says, covered with boils and matter; they mix their drink with tears, and their bread with ashes; their skin hangs about their bones, dried like grass. One does not hear anything else but "Woe, woe! forgiving mercy!" Some dare scarcely refresh their burning tongues with a few drops of water; and having swallowed only a few morsels of bread, they throw the rest away, in the conviction of their unworthiness. They do not think of anything else but death, eternity, and judgment! They have callous knees, hollow eyes and cheeks, their chests are wounded by strokes, and they very often spit blood; they are covered with filthy rags full of vermin, like criminals in prisons or possessed. Some of them pray to their neighbours not to bury them, but to throw them away, that they might rot like beasts!'

Such of those hermits as were not yet mad, must needs have become so by this manner of living. The example set by the holiest amongst them challenged imitation and roused ambition.

The ascetic fanaticism became an epidemic. The wilderness was so crowded with howling saints, that they were compelled to form large communities—monasteries. St Pachome is considered as their originator. In his own, he had 1700 monks; and over 7000 others he had the supreme direction. There were, in the fourth century, no less than 100,000 monks and nuns in Egypt, for the yet more excitable women participated, of course, in this ascetic fashion. The laughter of the heathens was of no avail, for the most revered Fathers of the Church called this kind of life the direct way to Paradise. The most sacred bonds of nature were torn asunder by this rage. Youths left their brides, like St Alexius, to pass their wedding-nights in the desert. One Annuo entertained his bride by reading to her the Epistles of St Paul to the Corinthians, which inspired her to such a degree, that she ran off with her husband to the desert, where they lived in a wretched hovel as if they were not married. John Colybita, the son of very respectable people in Rome, ran also off on his wedding-night, but was driven back by invincible home-sickness. Seventeen years he lived in a dog's hut, which he had placed near the dwelling of his mourning parents, to whom he made himself known only in his last moments.

Such things were the fruit of the teaching of men like St Jerome, who said: 'And if your young sisters and brothers fall round your neck—and if your mother, with tears, and dishevelled hair, and torn garments, shews the breast which nourished you—if your father throws himself down on the threshold—*kick them away with your feet*, and hasten to the standard of the cross with dry eyes.' Many were driven into the desert by vanity or ambition, for the hermits and monks were highly respected. The country where particularly holy saints of this kind lived thought itself highly blessed, and very often the inhabitants of countries not favoured in this way kidnapped them. This happened several times to Salamanian, from Kapersana, near the Euphrates, who, during all his changes, did not utter a single word. The Emperor Theodosius said: 'If I were not Theodosius, I would wish to be a monk.'

Particular fame amongst the saints of the desert is enjoyed by St Paul, St Antony, St Pachome, St Hilarion, and the two St Macarius. To St Antony are ascribed a great many wonders. The Roman authors tell us that the wild beasts obeyed him like trained poodle-dogs; very often they crowded round his cave, but waited always till he had finished his prayers, when they received his blessing, and went after their prey with the most Christian thoughts. When he buried St Paul, from Thebes, in Egypt, who died 113



years old, two pious lions helped him to dig the grave. When they had finished, they received St Antony's blessing, and went away into the desert contentedly wagging their tails. St Macarius enjoyed the confidence of the wild beasts. Once came a hyena, and knocked modestly at his door. When he opened, she laid before his feet a blind cub of hers, together with the skin of a lamb, as a fee for the cure. 'I do not want it,' said the angry saint: 'you have stolen it;' and the pious hyena was so affected, that she shed tears. This touched the saint, and he said, in a more friendly manner: 'If you will promise never to kill a lamb again, I will take this skin, and heal your cub.' The hyena nodded assent, and the saint effected the cure desired.

This fanaticism, originating in the Orient, found also plenty of admirers in Europe, particularly through the influence and writings of St Ambrose, bishop of Milan, and St Jerome. St Martin was the first who established monasteries in France. He was born in 316 in Pannonia, and became a soldier. When he once gave the half of his cloak to a beggar, he fancied that he heard the voice of Christ saying: 'What you have done to others, you have done to me.' This occurrence induced him to leave his regiment, and to turn saint. He ascended to high fame, and became both archbishop of Tours and a very haughty saint. When appearing before the Emperor Valentinian, this prince was not inclined to rise from his throne to greet the saint. The holy man was very much vexed at such presumption, sent a prayer to Heaven, and—says the legend—flames sprang from the seat of the emperor, compelling him to rise very precipitately.

The number of the European saints is legion, and we shall only mention the most respected among them. St Benedict, the father of the numberless Benedictine monks, was born in 480, and died in 543. The legend informs us, that he already sung psalms in the womb of his mother; and when he cried like other children, angels brought him toys, and made music on instruments which were invented many centuries later amongst men. His first wonder was that of mending a broken pot by his prayers. Many of those saints shew quite a wonderful fervency and perseverance in praying. An Irish saint, of the name of Kewden, prayed so long, that a swallow had not only time to lay her eggs into his joined hands, but to hatch them also!

A very respectable saint was St Bernard. Luther says of him: 'If there was ever a pious monk, it was Bernard. Of his like, I have never heard or read, and I estimate him higher than all the monks and priests of the whole world.' He was born in 1091 at Fontaine, near Dijon, and belonged to a noble family. It is true he was a fanatic, but a thoroughly noble-minded man. He tormented his body dreadfully, and dined with his monks on beech-leaves and the worst barley-bread. If he occasionally indulged his stomach with a little bit of flour-pap seasoned with oil and honey, he atoned afterwards for this weakness with tears and prayers. His piety and mental gifts procured him great fame and veneration, and when once entering Milan, his hands and arms were swollen by the kisses of the importunate believers crowding around him. He might have become archbishop, or even pope, if he had chosen, but he preferred his humble station. Notwithstanding this, he decided between popes and kings, and none of them dared to enter his monastery on horseback. He was the soul of the second crusade; but beside such trifles, he did a great many real wonders, and his victories over the poor devil are numberless. That was not to be wondered at, for the force of his prayer was such that it moved stones. Once a stone Christ descended from his cross to embrace the pious man, and an image of the Virgin did yet more—she tendered him her breast, and he sucked from it the sweetest woman's milk. Once, when entering the

cathedral at Speyer, he greeted the image of the Virgin there, saying: 'Hail, O queen!' and to the wonder of all present, the stone Virgin opened her mouth and answered: 'We thank you, our dear Bernard;' but they were yet more astonished, when the surly saint uttered the impolite words of the apostle: 'Women must be silent in the assembly.'

The good which the Benedictines and Bernardines did was soon counterbalanced by the mendicant orders. The idea of them originated in the brain of John Bernardus, the son of a merchant in Assisi, in Umbria. He is known by the name of St Francis of Assisi, or of the Seraphic Father. He was deemed good for nothing, and became a soldier. As such, he was taken prisoner, and fell dangerously ill. When he recovered, he became a saint—that is to say, first, a simple fool, associating with beggars and rogues, kissing their boils and ulcers, wearing the most filthy rags, and robbing his father, in order to employ the money on the restoration of an old church. The bishop of Assisi patronised the fool, and sent him out begging for this purpose, and he succeeded uncommonly well. In the beginning, Francis was despised and laughed at, but in three or four years his fame rose to such a pitch that he was received in procession by clergy and people, when approaching a town, and all the bells were set ringing (1211). He was without doubt an original and a very queer fellow, of whom the Catholic authors relate the most funny things in the most serious manner. He was very fond of animals, and called them his brothers and sisters. A louse, which he found on his cape, he took very carefully between his fingers, kissed it, and said: 'Dear sister louse, praise the Lord with me,' and placed it on his head, from which it probably came. He very often held a sermon before the geese, ducks, and fowls; and when once sparrows and swallows disturbed him in this by the noise they made, he begged his dear sisters to be quiet. A peasant carrying two lambs to the market, was asked by him: 'Why do you torment my brothers thus?' He used to call his body his brother-ass, and often took his revenge on it: he would roll himself stark naked amongst thorns, immerse himself up to the neck in freezing tanks, or wallow in the snow.

St Dominic was the founder of the order of the Dominican monks, and also the originator of the censure of books, and the inquisition, that greatest disgrace to the Roman Church. Notwithstanding this, St Dominic is a most revered saint. He invented nine different positions in praying, and prayed himself with such a fervency that he was raised by it a few feet above ground. You may see in the Louvre, in Paris, a picture which represents him in this state. How he otherwise violated the laws of nature by his wonders, we shall pass over, and proceed to speak about a few female saints.

Their number is very great, and the wonders which they performed are yet more astonishing.

St Theresa is one of the greatest among the lady-saints. She was born in 1515, in Spain, and descended from a noble family. Her worshippers give her the most curious names, as Ark of Wisdom, Heavenly Amazon, Balm-garden, and Organ and Private Secretary of the Holy Ghost. Already, when a child, she intended to run away from her parents, to go to Africa, in order to suffer martyrdom, but was prevented. However, when she had attained her seventeenth year, her parents thought it better to send her to the monastery of the Carmelites at Avila. She was visited by the most awful revelations and visions; and when once the Host flew on its own account from the hand of the bishop into the mouth of Theresa, the saint was made. At last she became abbess of a monastery at Pastrana, and could indulge her sanctity to her heart's content. St Theresa's nuns were compelled to go barefooted, and to submit to the

most severe discipline. The strictest obedience was required from them; and a nun, who made a wry face at bad bread, was stripped, and tied to the manger of a donkey, where she had to eat oats and hay for ten days. It was therefore not to be wondered at if the nuns followed literally the commands of their saint. Once she was asked by a nun who was to sing the vespers; and the saint, being in no good-humour, answered peevishly: 'Why, the cat!' The nun took the cat under her arm, and pinched its tail before the altar till it sang its finest tunes. Self-torment was the order of the day in this monastery. The nuns used an immense quantity of rods. They slept on thorns, or on the snow, drank from spittoons, took dead mice and other disgusting things in their mouths, drank blood, dipped their bread in rotten eggs, and pierced their tongues with pins, when they had used them out of tune.

About the same time flourished the Italian St Catharine of Cardone. Love had made her mad; she lived in a cave, wore a gown interwoven with thorns and iron wire, ate grass like a beast, without using her hands; and once she did not eat for forty days. In this manner she managed to live during three years. St Passidea was a nun from Siena. She scourged herself with thorns, and washed the wounds with vinegar, salt, and pepper. She slept on pease and cherry-stones, went into freezing tanks, and placed herself even for a time, with her head downward, in a smoky chimney!

St Claire led a very austere life. Instead of a shift, she wore a pig's skin, or some cloth made of horse-hair, and was so exceedingly humble that she would kiss the feet of the most filthy dairy-wench, and wash them after kissing. When she died, there were found in her heart small specimens of all the instruments used in torturing our Saviour. St Claire was the mother of the female Franciscans, and to her are about 900 nunneries indebted for their existence.

We shall wind up our file of saints with St Rosa, who slept on knotty stems and bits of glass. The whole nunnery wherein she resided was teeming with fleas, but none of those libertine cavaliers dared bite so good a woman. We must believe it, for it is stated in the bull of the pope which contains her diploma as a saint!

Besides these saints, and many hundreds which we have no time to mention, prayers are sometimes said before the pictures of others who never existed, and owe their origin to some legend—as St Christopherus, St George, St Mauritius with 6600 companions, the Seven Sleepers, St Ursula with her 11,000 virgins, and St Guinefort of Verona, who was a very honest fellow, but unfortunately a four-legged dog!

#### THE LIFE-ASSURANCE AGENT'S APPEAL

TUNE—*Ally Croker.*

COME now, my friend, and do not stare,  
But listen to my strain a bit;  
I wish to make you just aware  
Of something for your benefit:  
As yet, you say, upon your life  
You have not got a policy;  
'Tis downright treason to your wife;  
I wish you would your folly see,  
And think of life-insurance,  
The uses of insurance;  
O think of the uncertainty  
Of life and health's endurance!

Our office is for soundness known,  
The STEADFAST PERPENDICULAR;  
And when you would be choosing one,  
You can't be too particular.

Our 'cumulated fund appears  
Increasing at a steady rate;  
A bonus every seven years,  
And yet our premiums moderate.  
Then think upon insurance,  
The use of life-insurance;  
Remember the uncertainty  
Of life and health's endurance!

You're twenty-seven next birthday;  
You ne'er had epilepsy, sir,  
Insanity, gout, hernia,  
Consumption, or dyspepsy, sir.  
Your medical attendant says,  
You're come of healthy parentage;  
You've lived in Britain all your days,  
And are of your apparent age:  
Then oh, my friend, insurance,  
Think, think of life-insurance;  
O think of the uncertainty  
Of life and health's endurance!

Your present state of health is good,  
With healthy occupation, sir;  
Your well-formed bellows-chest has stood  
The doctor's auscultation, sir;  
No hazard in your way of life;  
You're neither lag nor cripple, sir;  
Last year you took yourself a wife,  
But have not ts'en to apple, sir;  
A model for insurance,  
Most fit for life-insurance;  
Oh, if you'll not cast in your lot,  
You'll vex me past endurance!

Pray, don't forget, though healthy yet,  
You're subject to mortality;  
The life of man we only can  
Foretell in the totality.  
The first year's premium being paid,  
You may demise to-morrow, sir,  
And then your widow will not need  
To either beg or borrow, sir:  
She's saved by life-insurance,  
By noble life-insurance;  
She's clad and fed by what you did  
While life had still endurance.

But say you've got a policy,  
Or even more than one of 'em,  
You may another take with me—  
You'll thrive beneath a ton of 'em!  
One ought to add a thousand pounds,  
Each new responsibility;  
It is a duty has no bounds,  
Save just a man's ability:  
Then oh, once more, insurance,  
Think well of life-insurance;  
Remember the uncertainty  
Of life and health's endurance!

Long, long ago there was a cove,  
Who called himself knight-errant, sir,  
Who, as the Ladies' Friend, did rove,  
Protecting them from Tyrant, sir;  
But, ladies, I'm your best friend now,  
As good as any lover t' ye,  
For all my object's to endow,  
And save you, dears, from Poverty:  
Then oh, my dears, insurance,  
Cry loud for life-insurance:  
If husbands not cast in their lot,  
Declare them past endurance!

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.  
Also sold by WILLIAM ROBERTSON, 23 Upper Sackville Street, DUBLIN, and all Booksellers.